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FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Bobolink Again Noted in Idaho.—In the March-April, 1910, CONDOR, Mr. H. C. Tracy notes the occurrence of the Bobolink (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*) near Meridian, Idaho, a point about eight miles east of my home ranch. I wish to confirm the presence of the Bobolink in this section by my own observations. In July, 1909, at a place some seven miles west and two miles north of where Mr. Tracy noted the species, I saw a male in full nuptial dress performing his characteristic aerial gyrations close by the roadside, over an alfalfa field, doubtless for the benefit of the brooding female. The bird was scarcely twenty yards away and could not possibly be mistaken for any other species. This single specimen, however, is the only one I have seen in Idaho during a residence of two years.—L. E. WYMAN.

Pinyon Jay at Salem, Oregon.—On December 21, 1910, two specimens of Pinyon Jay (*Cyanocephalus cyanocephalus*) were taken at Salem by Mr. H. S. Peck, and given to the writer for preservation. They were shot out of a flock of six, which had been seen for some time about the same locality. Both were males and in good condition. They had evidently been feeding on the ground, as their feet and plumage were much soiled with reddish clay.—M. E. PECK.

The California Shrike as a Reptile Destroyer.—On May 12, 1910, I was waiting at the isolated station of Bixby, Los Angeles County, when a California Shrike was seen to hover for an instant over an object in the grass across the road, and strike with a vigorous downward thrust, almost immediately returning to its position above, to repeat. As I advanced to find the object of its attention, the bird struck again and arose with a snake in its talons and started off down the road. I shouted and the bird dropped its trailing burden and flew to a nearby telegraph pole. I examined the reptile a moment later and found it to be a specimen of California garter snake, 18½ inches in length, with the neck severed directly behind the skull.—PINGREE I. OSBURN.

The Spotted Owl in Northern California.—On the night of August 28, 1910, Mrs. Clay and myself spent the night in camp on the north branch of Elk River, at a point ten miles a little east of south from Eureka. A maple flat, in the heart of the redwoods, shaded, and right on the edge of a stream, it was a most charming spot to spend a night. Soon after darkness fell over our camp, we were attracted by an odd, nerve-racking noise. It would start in with a kind of long-drawn-out whining, gradually increasing to a more grating sound, which gave rise to uncertain thoughts, as to its source. It first seemed on the hill-side across the creek, then came nearer, all the while increasing in distinctness, and finally seemed to be double, with ever increasing loudness, until the woods seemed uncanny. My curiosity was aroused to a nervous pitch, and I found it hard to induce my wife to follow me with a paper torch. I took my collecting barrel from the twelve gauge and slid in a shell of number sixes. After following in the direction of the noise for some little distance, I located the ghostly racket nearly over my head in a large maple tree. The noise never ceased, but was continually repeated; and save the smooth branches, sparingly tipped with rustling leaves, as they swayed under the strain of the gentle night breeze, nothing could be seen except the twinkling blue background. Finally, I remarked, "It's an owl". A spread of wings was plainly visible now, and right on a bare limb, not over three feet above my head, sat an inquisitive owl with craning neck. Then came another from higher up and perched beside the first. They were attracted by the light, and sat there stretching their necks, with as much curiosity as I had shown, at the sound of a noise that seemed almost panther-like. In a few seconds the collecting tube replaced the number sixes, and after stepping back a few feet, I took aim as best I could and fired. A hurried flapping of wings and a rustling in the branches was none too promising. The number twelve shot were not as effective as I expected, for in a moment everything was still, and not an owl fell to earth.

Early the next morning, I started a systematic search of the nearby trees. After an hour's hunting, both in the brush and on the ground, I cast my eyes on a half-dazed and blinded owl. It proved to be an immature female of the Northern Spotted Owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*). Although we heard several owls in the night, it was my first experience with the Spotted Owl.—C. I. CLAY.

Early Spring Arrival of Bullock Oriole in Los Angeles.—On January 27, 1911, I was much surprised to see a male Bullock Oriole (*Icterus bullocki*) in a tree in my front yard. On January 30, I also saw a male in the same place. I believe that they were two different birds as the plumage of the second one seen was much brighter than that of the first.—ANTONIN JAY.

Sparrow Notes from Fresno County, California.—In my notes on the Brewer Sparrow in the November-December CONDOR I might have stated that these little sparrows are resident throughout the entire winter, frequenting much the same area as does the Western Vesper Sparrow (*Poocetes gramineus confinis*). December 26, 1910, I found several *Spizella breweri* in an old weed-grown berry patch that was bordered on the south by a peach orchard and on the other three sides by vineyards. One specimen was taken and is now in my collection. November 20 I observed two Slate-colored Sparrows (*Passerella iliaca schistacea*) and on the twenty-fourth another which was secured. This bird was associated with a large flock of mixed sparrows. The day after Christmas I also found two or three Forbush Sparrows (*Melospizi lincolni striata*) in a large brush pile at the edge of a weedy pasture. One was collected. All these birds were found within a few miles of Fresno.

Mr. Joseph Sloanaker informs me that on the plains near Raisin City, fifteen miles southwest of Fresno, he finds the California Sage Sparrow (*Amphispiza nevadensis canescens*) to be very common during the winter. I have a specimen from there taken December 11, 1910.—JOHN G. TYLER.

Brewer Sparrow Breeding in Simi Valley.—I have found the Brewer Sparrow (*Spizella breweri*) to be a rather common resident of the Simi Valley, Ventura County, and have found many nests containing eggs and young in that vicinity. Two sets of eggs in my collection are as follows: Set of five, fresh, taken with female bird May 21, 1899, and set of three slightly incubated, taken May 28, the same year. The birds are very shy, sneaking from the nest and running through the grass instead of flying; consequently the nests are rather difficult to locate. All the nests that I have found have been on a south slope, sparsely covered with sage brush and cactus, with a thicker growth of smaller plants and shrubs between. The nests were in these smaller shrubs, generally not over a foot above the ground.—J. S. APPLETON.

Notes on Two Birds from Santa Catalina Island, California.—On February 12, 1910, while coasting along the rocks near White's Landing, Catalina Island, I saw and positively identified a Frazar Oystercatcher (*Haematopus frazari*). At first sight of us the bird left its perch on an elbow of crumbling rock and circled toward the boat, but not near enough for a shot. It continued its rapid flight, uttering the familiar call, until it was lost to sight around a dangerous jutting reef. This is the farthest north record according to all available notes that have come under my notice, published or unpublished.

On the day following, an Ancient Murrelet (*Synthliboramphus antiquus*), a rare bird in these waters at any season, was collected from a flock of eight, grouped about one-half mile off shore. The birds were exceedingly shy, and after one first dive of alarm were out of reach. The specimen obtained exhibited ability to swim under water, even after wounded.—PINGREE I. OSBURN.

Blue-winged Teal in Southern California.—The Blue-winged Teal (*Querquedula discors*) has been quite common in the marshes of Los Angeles County this winter up to the present time. I have seen many specimens that were brought in to the local taxidermists by hunters. Although this species has not been considered a common winter visitant to southern California, I think it is safe to say that it is a fairly common visitant during some winters. Other winters, however, it is rare. This irregularity is probably due to meteorological conditions.—G. WILLETT.